

Friends of Bruno Newsletter #3

o **A New Phase.** Three months after the initiation of the Bruno standards distribution project - following a request by the ITU's Coordination Committee to end the experiment - it now begins a new experimental phase. This issue of *Friends* discusses recent developments.

o **Phenomenal Results.** The Bruno Project was initiated through a huge state-of-the-art effort undertaken by the Digital Resource Institute at the University of Colorado, where thousands of CCITT and CCIR standards were converted to several widely-used formats and provided through the worldwide open network-of-networks known as the Internet.

Project leader Carl Malamud indicated in a letter to the ITU Secretary-General that in a period of 10 weeks, over 113,000 documents were accessed by 1,299 hosts via the FTP (file transfer protocol) service and 443 users via the Infoserve electronic mail server. The FTP service was accessed by over 37 top-level domains, which includes at least 24 countries. The Infoserve and FTP capabilities combined were accessed by at least 33 countries. Malamud said that final numbers will indicate access in over 40 countries.

The experiment was so enormously successful - especially in terms of developing interest around the world, that numerous "Sons of Bruno" were created in more than 15 countries around the world. These additional 21 subsidiary servers are estimated to have brought the total number of files accessed to about one-half million. A point of interest is that only 3 of the sites obtained their data by magnetic tape. All the other had staff capable of using the international networking infrastructure to do their work.

o **Cloud-cuckoo land?** In seeking to stop distribution of the ITU standards via the Bruno methods, the ITU Coordination Committee gave no reasons for its actions.

The ITU itself has no present ability to use contemporary information internetworking technologies - although the simple connection of its internal document server to a nearby Internet node could provide instant access to a wide range of materials, including CCI standards.

This unexplained action has precipitated widespread reactions around the world. One noted European research director responded "I keep feeling that I live in cloud-cuckoo land (not sure what that translates to in U.S. English)." Central European representatives decried the potential removal of what was viewed as a critical means of providing timely, affordable access to current technological material.

The ITU Coordination Committee action was no doubt precipitated by several factors not uncommon in these environments: embarrassment that a previously announced 8-year major bureaucratic project was accomplished by a couple of people in 8 weeks; unfamiliarity with and/or "cultural" antipathy toward information networking technologies that were developed by other segments of the industry; hostility toward a more open access environment; and informal tie-ins with a proposed closed EC standards distribution project known as RISE. And perhaps, that this material somehow "belonged" to the ITU secretariats, and thus was their exclusive domain - even if access was not being provided by them.

Commentators and reports in the trade press simply saw the action as confirmation of the inability of old international organizations to adapt and use current information technologies; and likely to more rapidly migrate standards making work to other organizations. It has also become an example within the U.S. Congress research body (OTA) study - underscoring a recommendation that all standards *distribution* activities be divest from standards making organizations because of

the inherent conflict of interest between the two activities.

o **The Experiment Continues.** The scope of the Bruno Project has expanded considerably beyond the original ITU - Digital Resources Institute dimensions. Servers throughout the world will continue to distribute a wide range of standards - some with the official sanction of the adopting standards organization, some not. Public standards - especially in ASCII form and quasi-legal material from intergovernmental organizations is not subject to copyright; anyone can distribute this material. Indeed, the interests of the public, of the industry, and even the organizations themselves are best served by the widest, lowest-cost possible dissemination.

The reactions and adaptations of standards organizations, groups, and individuals - positive and negative - are properly part of the "experiment." The experiment that was initiated by the ITU now belongs to everyone.

Those interested in maintaining the Bruno Project or in its subsequent growth and results, should direct inquiries to: <standards@digital.resource.org> or Tony Rutkowski at <amr@media-lab.media.mit.edu>.
